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ABSTRACT

Whether or not the racial composition of a school affects black students' educational expectations is examined in this paper. It compares the educational expectations of 1973 high school sophomores with a 1967 group. Data were collected via questionnaires administered to groups of entire 10th grade classes. The study population was drawn from a wide range of racially mixed school environments in South Carolina. It is concluded that the data support the view that the desegregation process has at least short term effects on the educational expectations of black youth. In all cases where black enrollments dramatically changed, expectations were lowered between 1967 and 1973. (Author/AM)

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Racial Composition of Schools and Mobility Projections of South Carolina Black Youth*

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Despite a number of studies in recent years concerning mobility attitudes and the racial composition of schools, conflicting results have prevented a clear understanding of this relationship. (Falk, 1975; St. John, 1975, Hammer, 1971; Falk and Cosby, 1974) Our paper will discuss this relationship as it pertains to a representative sample of South Carolina, black youth. The question to be examined is whether or not the racial composition of the school attended affects black students' educational expectations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several conflicting viewpoints have evolved concerning the effects of school types (racial composition, desegregated vs. segregated, etc.) on student aspirations, expectations and attainment. Christopher Jencks (1972), for example, suggests that there is very little difference in attitudes and attainment between students in segregated and desegregated schools, when family background and achievement test scores are held constant. However, evidence from other studies, including the Colemen Report (1966), indicates that a relationship exists between the percentage of white enrollment and individual performance, but that the differences can more accurately be explained by the background characteristics of the entering students.

Other researchers contend that the racial composition of schools does directly influence expectations and aspirations, though they do not always agree on the direction of the relationship. In some studies (Cohen, et. al., 1972; St. John and Smith, 1969; Veroff and Peele, 1969) achievement of blacks in desegregated schools has increased while aspirations were lowered. While other studies (Linsay and Gottlieb, 1969; Brookover and Erickson, 1969) have shown a rise in black aspirations and expectations associated with an increase in white enrollment in schools.

As this paper will introduce a time dimension into the analysis of desegregation, it is important to note the efforts of Kuvlesky and Stanley (1976) who examined historical change in the status projections of East Texas high school sophomores. They compared 1966 and 1972 students from the same set of schools, located in very rural, low income, black counties. An overall drop in educational aspirations and expectations over the time period was found, with the largest difference occurring for blacks. The authors mention the possibility of

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forced racial integration as having a substantial influence on this trend. Virlyn Boyd (1974) found similar change patterns for his samples of 1967 and 1973 sophomores in South Carolina.

The present paper will examine not only the static differences between types of schools, but will assess the effects of the desegregation process over time on mobility projections. Using data from black sophomores in 1967 and 1973 from high schools across South Carolina, the author will focus specifically on the relationship between educational expectations and the racial composition of schools. The effects of sex, socio-economic status, and rural/urban residence will be introduced to elaborate this relationship.

The study population is drawn from a wide range of racially mixed school environments (10 schools with 18% to 95% black enrollment in 1973). The author will compare the educational expectations of 1973 sophomores to those in 1967 (before desegregation) enabling her to assess the direction and magnitude of historical change for students attending schools of different racial mixtures. Unlike many previous studies utilizing unrepresentative samples, this paper will report from a cross-section of South Carolina black youth.

Our approach is consistent with St. John (1975) when she stresses the necessity of comparing students within versus between racial groupings to insure equivalence of subjects in this type of research. As children within racial groupings differ in terms of achievement levels, genetic makeup, home environments, and socioeconomic backgrounds, it is necessary to neutralize these influences to isolate school effects. Therefore, the focus will be only upon black sophomores.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The analytic approach is twofold. First, the author will examine the relationship between school racial composition and educational expectations of black sophomores in 1973 and 1967. The purpose is to assess whether or not differences in educational expectations exist among students attending different types of schools (as defined by their racial mixtures) at these two time periods. Further, to more fully probe the effect of racial composition, a comparison of the change in expectations among students from the same schools over the two contacts will be made.

Data were collected by questionnaires administered to groups of entire tenth grade classes, or in tenth grade English classes. No attempt was made to contact students who were absent on the day of the data collection. Data collection for both contacts was conducted by Virlyn Boyd -- Clemson University, and every attempt at uniformity of procedures between time periods was made. The analysis of the data will utilize percentage distributions, chi square and gamma when useful, to assess the data for each contact, and the magnitude of change between contacts.

STUDY POPULATION

In 1967 a representative sample of South Carolina high school sophomores was drawn which included 42 randomly selected high schools

in 26 counties. The sample was stratified by race of students and size of the tenth grade class in 1965-66. For the present study, a subsample of 10 schools (from the original 42) from eight counties was chosen that matched the schools chosen in 1973 to be representative of the original sample. The original 1973 sample included sixteen schools of which we will utilize only those common to our 1967 subsample (N=9).

The schools in the sample for this paper are from counties including a wide range of racial mixtures, rural/urban residence, population size, and levels of income which represent the different areas of South Carolina. The sample for 1967 includes 849 respondents, 45% male and 55% female; the 1973 sample has a total of 1026 cases with 49% male and 51% female.

STUDY VARIABLES

School Type was determined by the racial composition of the school based on the number of blacks in the sophomore class for each time period. Due to the introduction of varying degrees of desegregation between contacts, this composition may or may not have changed for each school. Schools were classified as having low (0-50%) or high (51-100%) black enrollment.

To assess students' Educational Expectation, the following question was asked in both 1967 and 1973: "What do you really expect to do about your education?" From a fixed set of six possible responses, three categories were derived: Low (High School graduation or less), Medium (technical training or junior college), and High (College graduate or more).

Residence was determined by responses to the following question: "Where have you lived most of your life?" Answers were coded as rural (Town or Village under 2500 or smaller) or urban (City over 2500).

Responses indicating Socioeconomic Origin were assessed by use of an abbreviated code similar to that of the U.S. Bureau of Census. The following question was asked of respondents: "What is the main job held by the major money earner of your home?" After deleting "housewife" and "nonearned income" categories, responses were recoded into two categories, blue collar and white collar.

ANALYSIS - 1973

The zero order relationship between school type and the educational expectations of black sophomores in 1973 is not clearly apparent, as indicated by the lack of percentage differences among cells and the extremely low association (gamma - .058) for these variables (Table 1).

When controls of sex, residence, and socioeconomic origin are introduced to elaborate the relationship between school type and educational expectations, we find the following patterns. Table 2 shows that females in both school types have higher expectations than males. While females in highly black schools have slightly higher expectations than those in highly white schools, these data suggest sex to have a stronger influence on expectations than school type.

When residence (rural/urban) was held constant the initial relationship of educational expectations and school type changed

considerably under both conditions of residence but in a different manner under each condition (Table 3). Overall, blacks from rural areas evidence lower expectations than their urban peers. A slightly stronger relationship between school type and expectations appears under the condition of urban residence (gamme = .11-NS at .05 level), but this association disappears for rural students (.02). Still residence appears more influential than school type on the expectations of these youth as shown by gamma of -.22 (significant at .05 level).

There may be several reasons why the expectation-school type relationship is not apparent under the condition of rural. The category "rural" may contain a very heterogeneous mixture of people from those attending small country schools, to those living outside a city but attending a city school. Also, a uniformly low socioeconomic origin for all rural students may contribute to the suppression of the initial relationship of school type and expectations. Thus, this category may not allow for an accurate assessment of the influence of residence on the relationship under study.

Socioeconomic origin and educational expectations shows the strongest relationship overall (.35 - sign.) in the analysis, with small percentage differences between types of school for children of blue or white collar families (Table 4). In the white collar category, around 53 percent have high expectations compared to only 30 percent to 35 percent for blue collar children. If any relationship between school type and expectation can be described from this, it is that black students in the predominantly black schools have slightly higher expectations than their peers in predominantly white schools. However, these data support the conclusion that socioeconomic origin is more highly related to educational expectations than school type. One must take into account the high number of missing cases (262) when considering this analysis, however.

1967 DATA

Upon examining data from black sophomores in 1967 from the same schools studied in 1973, a somewhat different picture of the relationship of educational expectations and school type becomes apparent (Table 5). Any analysis of this data must consider the very small number of cases in the low black enrollment schools (N=80). Since this data was collected before desegregation took place, very few black students were enrolled in predominantly white schools. Though conclusions will still be drawn based on the data, they must be interpretted conservatively due to this factor. Furthermore, because of the extremely unequal marginals, gamma will not be used.

A comparison of percentages from Table 5 indicates a slight relationship between expectations and school type, in which black students in predominantly white schools have higher expectations than those in predominantly black schools. A comparison of percentage differences indicates this relationship is stronger than it was for students in 1973, and of the opposite direction (1973 students in predominantly black schools have higher expectations!). In both types of schools the largest percentage of students appear in the high expectation category, whereas in 1973 expectations are more evenly distributed into the three categories.

In Table 6 we see that both sexes display high educational expectations, but males in general have higher expectations than females.

Percentage differences indicate only a very slight relationship between school and expectations, and more clearly for females than males. Again the direction of the relationship means higher expectations for those in predominantly white schools. These data further contradict our findings for 1973 in which overall expectations are lower, sex and expectations are more highly related, females have higher overall expectations than males, and the slight association of school type and expectation reveal higher expectations by those in predominantly black schools.

As in 1973, residence proves to be influencial on the relationship of school type and educational expectations under both conditions of school type in 1967 (Table 7). As in 1973, rural students have lower expectations than their urban peers. A relationship between school type and expectation is apparent for both conditions of residence: blacks in predominantly white schools have slightly higher expectations than those in predominantly black schools. Interestingly, this relationship is in the opposite direction of that shown by the 1973 data. Overall, percentage differences between schools compared to those between residences, reveal both school type and residence to be equally influential in their effects on the educational expectations of black students.

Table 8 shows that in 1967 socioeconomic origin is not as overriding an influence on the school type -- expectation relationship as it is in 1973. A very small percentage of students come from white collar backgrounds (17 percent), but as expected, the students of these white collar families have higher expectations than blue collar students. The most pronounced effect is shown in the high expectation category of predominantly black schools.

The relationship of school type to expectation shows a different pattern under each condition of socioeconomic origin. Blue collar youth attending predominantly white schools, have higher expectations than their white collar peers. However, students from white collar families attending predominantly black schools expect to attain higher educational levels, than those in highly black schools. Apparently, socioeconomic origin and school type when combined, produce a conditional effect on educational expectations.

Thus, the data for 1973 and 1967 reveal two different patterns concerning the relationship of educational expectations and school type. Overall, the type of school one attends in terms of racial composition, seems far more influential in the determination of educational expectations in 1967 -- before desegregation, than in 1973. Though effects are weak for both contacts, in 1967 it is students in predominantly white schools who have higher expectations. Students in predominantly black schools have slightly higher expectations in 1973.

Other factors such as residence, socioeconomic origin, and sex proved influential on expectations, but in different patterns for each contact. Sex which has a considerable effect in 1973, is not very influential in 1967. Socioeconomic status has a stronger effect in 1973, but a conditional effect in 1967 which changes the strength of the original relationship between school type-expectation very little. Also, residence manifests greater influence

on the educational expectations of students in 1973 than in 1967, though it produces an effect for both contacts.

The data seem to indicate that desegregation, which took place between 1967 and 1973 and included all of the schools in the analysis, has had an effect on the expectations of black youth. While expectations have been lowered overall, there seems to be a leveling effect between students of predominantly white and those of predominantly black schools. To further examine this possibility, we shall now compare the magnitude of change in expectations for different types of schools below.

COMPARISON OF CHANGE BETWEEN 1967 AND 1973

To further isolate the effect of desegregation, we can match and group schools by change in black enrollment over time. To simplify matters, only the zero order relationship of educational expectation and school type will be examined for each set of schools.

Table 9 displays an overall lowering of the educational expectations of students attending all schools (except those of high black enrollments at both contacts). However, the greatest magnitude of change occurs among schools that had low black enrollments in 1967. Schools which increased their black enrollment from low to high, display the most pronounced change of all schools in the study. Those schools with high black enrollments over both time periods show the least change (virtually no change at all).

The greater changes among 1967 "low" schools may be a reflection of short run tensions or disruptions caused by the desegregation process which involves the addition of blacks to predominantly white schools. The addition of whites to highly black schools is probably less disruptive a process. Thus, these changes in the "low" schools may level off when such initial tensions wear off. Such an interpretation is supportive of Jencks' view concerning the short-run effects of desegregation.

Results of Table 9 indicate that the process of historical change in educational expectations varies greatly (from 0.7 percent to 26.4 percent) with the change in black enrollment occurring over the two time periods. Comparing '67 "lows" and '67 "highs", schools whose black enrollments greatly change (from low to high or high to low) have more pronounced decreases in expectations, than those whose black enrollments remain either low or high over time. Furthermore, the magnitude of change for schools with low black enrollment at both contacts, might be inflated due to the wide range of enrollments within the "low" category (2 percent - 48 percent) over time. There is less variation in black enrollments for those schools in the "high" group.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions seem apparent from the examination of the data for 1967 and 1973. First, the racial composition of the school attended (in 1967) seems to have a weak but definite effect on the educational expectations of black students by increasing expectations of those attending predominantly white schools. This trend

appears to level off in 1973 where there is far less difference in expectations between those attending schools of different racial mixtures. At this point in time, other variables, i.e., sex, residence, and socioeconomic status take over as more influential factors in the determination of black youth's educational expectations. The effect on a black student of being in an overwhelmingly black or overwhelmingly white school environment as in 1967, might have produced school differences which dissipated in 1973 when after desegregation, most schools had more even mixtures of blacks and whites. As those few blacks in 1967 who attended predominantly white schools, had such extremely high expectations in relation to their peers, they had "farther to fall" to get in line with their peers in predominantly black schools.

This data does not uniformly support the views that high white enrollment or high black enrollment is the stimulus to higher expectations for blacks, as schools whose black enrollments went from high to low and visa versa both display a lowering of expectations over the two time periods. However, as this decrease is more pronounced for schools whose black enrollment increased, there may be slight support for the "exposure to white standards" theory of influencing black mobility projections.

The appraoch most supported seems to be that of Jencks', in that schools which in both time periods had high black enrollments, display the most stable environments of those examined for blacks. For students in these school situations, there are no short-run tensions experienced due to the desegregation process, as it does not effect their enrollments. There is also, no change in their expectations which in 1973 remained higher than any other group of schools. Other schools which were more affected by the desegregation process, and whose schools significantly changed their black enrollments, display reductions in expectations. (Again, those schools that remained "low" expereinced 40 percent changes in black enrollment though the coding scheme did not reflect them). Interestingly, this process has a sobering effect or a lowering of expectations for all schools despite the direction their black enrollments changed.

Thus, overall one can say, though the relationship is a complex one, this data supports the view that the desegregation process has at least short term effects on the educational expectations of black youth. In all cases where black enrollments dramatically change, expectations are lowered between 1967 and 1973. In the case where black enrollment is not affected by the desegregation process, expectations remain the same over both contacts. Further research extending this time frame may indicate whether these effects are in fact due to short run tensions, or more long term influences. Therefore, instead of studying desegregation in static terms of differences in the racial mixtures of schools, it may be more fruitful to examine the desegregation process as a change in racial enrollments over time, to better understand these differences in educational expectations.

TABLE 1. Educational Expectations by School Type - 1973 (Percentages)

Educational Expectations	School Type: Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	34.3	32.3	
Medium	32.1	30.4	
High	33.5	37.3	
Total	492	517	1009

TABLE 2. Educational Expectation by School Type by Sex - 1973 (Percentages)

Educational Expectations	Sex: Male, School Type: Low Black Enrollment	Male, High Black Enrollment	Female, Low Black Enrollment	Female, High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	36.9	34.0	30.4	30.6	
Medium	28.4	33.2	35.4	27.5	
High	32.8	32.8	34.2	41.9	
Total	229	259	263	258	1009

TABLE 3. Educational Expectation by School Type by Residence - 1973 (Percentages)

Educational Expectations	Residence: Urban, School Type: Low Black Enrollment	Urban, High Black Enrollment	Rural, Low Black Enrollment	Rural, High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	28.3	24.3	40.9	39.7	
Medium	34.8	32.1	28.6	28.8	
High	37.0	43.6	30.5	31.5	
Total	276	243	203	267	989

TABLE 4. Educational Expectations by School Type by Socioeconomic Origin - 1973 (Percentages)

Educational Expectations	Socioeconomic Origin: Blue Collar, School Type: Low Black Enrollment	Blue Collar, High Black Enrollment	White Collar, Low Black Enrollment	White Collar, High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	35.0	31.1	22.5	15.5	
Medium	35.0	33.4	25.0	31.3	
High	30.0	35.4	52.5	53.5	
Total	283	302	80	99	764

TABLE 5. Educational Expectations by School Type - 1967 (Percentages)

Educational Expectations	School Type: Low Black Enrollment	School Type: High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	13.8	22.1	
Medium	36.2	36.2	
High	50.0	41.7	
Total	80	760	840

TABLE 6. Educational Expectations by School Type by Sex - 1967 (Percentages)

	Sex: Male, School Type		Sex: Female, School Type		
Educational Expectations	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	22.2	20.7	9.4	23.3	
Medium	25.9	36.9	41.5	35.5	
High	51.9	42.3	49.1	41.2	
Total	27	352	53	408	840

TABLE 7. Educational Expectations by School Type by Residence - 1967 (Percentages)

	Residence: Urban, School Type		Residence: Rural, School Type		
Educational Expectations	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	12.9	21.6	14.6	23.4	
Medium	32.3	31.2	39.6	43.7	
High	54.8	47.2	45.8	32.9	
Total	31	468	48	286	833

TABLE 8. Educational Expectations by School Type by Socioeconomic Origin - 1967 (Percentages)

	Socioeconomic Origin: Blue Collar, School Type		Socioeconomic Origin: White Collar, School Type		
Educational Expectations	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Low Black Enrollment	High Black Enrollment	Total
Low	15.2	22.8	4.3	10.5	
Medium	39.1	37.0	39.1	20.9	
High	45.7	40.2	56.5	68.6	
Total	46	495	23	86	650

TABLE 9. Educational Expectation by Year by School Type Changes (1967-1973)

Educational Expectations	School Type Changes Between Contacts											
	Low* 1967	Low 1973	Change	Low 1967	High* 1973	Change	High 1967	High 1973	Change	High 1967	Low 1973	Change
Low	23.5	37.5	+14.0	6.5	32.9	+26.4	26.0	25.7	- 0.3	18.7	28.0	+ 9.3
Medium	26.5	31.7	+ 5.2	43.5	28.5	-15.0	31.9	31.6	- 0.3	39.9	32.9	- 7.0
High	50.0	38.8	-19.2	50.0	38.6	-11.4	42.1	42.8	+ 0.7	41.4	39.1	- 2.3
Total	34	331		46	407		354	339		406	161	

* "Low" and "High" refer to low or high black enrollment.

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